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21 August 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director, Office of Current Intelligence  
SUBJECT : US-USSR Relations

1. The USSR has been taking a more forthcoming approach to problems affecting its relationship with the US. We have noted the following:

a) Seabeds Treaty: The new Soviet draft presented at Geneva on 19 August accepts the US position that a ban should be imposed only on weapons of mass destruction. There are still differences on verification and a treaty-free maritime zone, but it appears that the Soviet delegation is finally ready to talk them over.

b) NPT: The Soviets have taken at least a tentative step toward ratification by recommending that the treaty be approved by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. There has been no indication of how soon ratification will come, but it is a move forward, and Moscow may believe it will help put pressure on those countries which have not yet signed.

c) UN Peacekeeping Missions: Soviet officials at the UN have begun emphasizing that Moscow is "anxious to reach agreement" with the US on the role of these missions. Major differences exist on financing and managing them, but the Soviets have shown a new willingness to compromise.

d) Gromyko's Speech: Gromyko's speech to the Supreme Soviet last month foreshadowed the new approach. He called for friendly relations with the US and indicated that Moscow is prepared

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for strategic arms limitations talks (SALT). Assorted Soviet officials have also indicated that Moscow may soon decide on a time and place for SALT, but have offered no explanation for the continued delay. Gromyko also made a carefully hedged expression of willingness to discuss Berlin. A three-power approach, sparked by his remarks, has not yet elicited a Soviet response, however.

e) Soviet Press: The Soviet press has taken a deliberately ambiguous stand toward issues affecting US-USSR relations. The recent ABM vote in the Senate has been described on the one hand as another victory for the Pentagon, and on the other as a hopeful sign that the American public was awakening to the evils of the military-industrial complex. There have been articles lauding coexistence and others warning the Soviet people to be wary of dealing with the US. Similarly, there has been encouragement for more trade with the West, but condemnation for US attempts at "bridge-building."

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3. All this still leaves us uncertain of what precisely the Soviets have in mind. Nevertheless, it is clear enough that they want to show a spirit of accommodation with the US, and it is not too farfetched to suggest we may be seeing the first signs of "summitry" on the part of the USSR.

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Chief, Soviet Foreign Policy Branch